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## NOTES AND REVIEWS

*The Physical Basis of Society.* BY CARL KELSEY, Ph.D. New York: D. Appleton and Company. 1916.

This book by the professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, is a veritable encyclopedia of scientific information. This encyclopedic character applies to the material in every chapter. The author has gleaned far and near and brought together in an interesting manner and accurate form the results of multitudes of research investigations. The extent of the compilation here represented becomes impressive as one notes the headings of the chapters: Earth and Man; Mutual Aid and the Struggle for Existence; the Control of Nature; the Evolution of Man; Heredity; Heredity and Society; Race Differences; Sex Differences; Influences of Society upon Population; Social Institutions; and The Nature of Progress. It is at once evident that to treat adequately all these important subjects within the space of 400 pages is an impossibility, and yet the author has succeeded in condensing a really astonishing amount of matter into this rather small space.

The fundamental criticism of the work would seem to be that it is a mere compilation and consequently lacks theoretical interest and solidity. Multitudes of facts are introduced apparently for their mere interest as facts without any significance for the development or illustration of a scientific principle. Thus the first 28 pages in their entirety seem to lack any particular significance for the subject of the book. The facts of soil and air analysis, of strata of life in the Great Lakes, etc., are sufficiently obvious in most cases, as is also their general significance as regards conditions essential to the life of plants and animals. But just why most of this matter should have been brought into a treatise relating to society is not clear from the author's own statement. These twenty-eight pages are not utilized in the later pages of the chapter where the influences of the physical world on man are discussed. If these pages are designed to give a picture of cosmic evolution then they are very patchy, disconnected, and inadequate. The cosmos is not made to evolve. There is a lack of imagination and generality in the treatment.

This whole chapter like most of the others would have been greatly improved by a more philosophical treatment of the earlier pages and especially by a larger amount of historical and anthropological data, such as Semple and Ratzel give.

The character of the work is well illustrated by the third chapter, for example, which is little better than a mere catalog of instances of man's increasing utilization of material resources and processes. To mention only a few of these we find here mentioned phosphorus, fisher's nets, land per capita, carbon, coal, petroleum, stone, bronze, steel, steam engine, electricity, electrolysis, animal and plant domestication, quinine, rubber and numerous other plants, cold storage, hot houses, artificial selection in plants and animals, the dog, the cat, cattle, the ass, swine, camels, horses, the goat, chickens, sheep, silk worm, bees, oysters, fishes, etc. The foregoing are treated in the first three-fifths of a chapter, the latter two-fifths of which deals with the effects of bacteriological investigation and the control of numerous diseases. Incidentally one may call attention to the chart, page 141, the source of which is not indicated.

In the chapter on the Evolution of Man we find only  $5\frac{1}{2}$  pages devoted to that subject and 35 devoted to a history of men's ideas regarding the creation and the evolution of earth and man. Here we have brief glimpses of ideas from the days of Aristotle to the present. A mere list of the names of those whose views are touched upon would fill a page. The value of this encyclopedic catalog is highly questionable. The student of sociology inquiring into the evolution of man acquires little of value in knowing that the Greeks were in their philosophical speculations, "approaching the idea of the 'reign of law.'" But the Greek nation was tottering and soon to fall. The Romans were interested in other problems and the only one even to mention the scientific attitude was Lucretius (50 B.C.) whom Clodd calls the "first anthropologist." There follows a few lines on the "oriental idea." Then a paragraph on the early Christian, one on Augustine, and in a few pages are recounted the doctrines of Aquinas, Ambroses, Peter Lombard, Wesley, Luther, Bartholomew, an English Franciscan, various other church fathers, the Protestant Reformation, etc. The latter part of the chapter, beginning with the treatment of Erasmus Darwin (pages 167-189) is much more significant in its matter and much better written. The author's scholarship is undoubtedly good, but here again we are introduced to various controverted points and a sketchy treatment of dif-

ferent aspects of Lamarckianism, natural selection, sexual selection, etc., and the reception of Darwinism by the thought of his day, all in 12 or 15 pages; these are followed by a survey of the zoölogical system in  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pages and certain features of the evolution of man, as above mentioned, in 5 or 6 pages. These last pages expose the weakness of the author's method. They do not convey any adequate conception of our present knowledge regarding the actual evolution of man in its palaeontological, phylogenetic, or anthropological aspects. The emphasis is most unfortunately placed for latter day readers who would eagerly welcome a summary of present knowledge.

The foregoing sufficiently characterizes the book and exposes its most glaring defects. One notices the omission of lines of investigation which are of utmost current interest, such as the entire mass of phylogenetic studies begun by Haeckel, the studies of the Eugenics Laboratory on assortative and preferential mating, fecundity of the social classes, selective birth and death rates, the question of the handicapping of the first born, the part played by sexual selection and natural selection in the human race, and indeed a very large proportion of the current information bearing particularly upon the social aspects of the matters discussed. It would seem that throughout the author has been so overwhelmed with the mass of scientific data developed in physics, chemistry and biology and so interested in the history of thought in various fields that there has not been room to relate his information sufficiently to social problems. Nevertheless the book serves most excellently as an introduction to a considerable range of scientific information for the general reader and as a stimulating text for college classes.

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